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NOAA AWARDS MORE THAN \$500,000 TO AMERICAN RIVERS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and American Rivers announced a \$531,261 grant to renew their joint effort to restore streams and rivers in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and California. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

American Rivers and the NOAA Restoration Center will kick off the first year of the new three-year partnership by committing to distribute funds to remove barriers to salmon, striped bass, American shad, and other species that migrate between fresh and salt water.

"This partnership between NOAA and American Rivers is a great example of the valuable projects and initiatives that NOAA grants help support," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA's goal of healthy coastal habitats and vibrant coastal communities can only be accomplished when there is strong local stewardship of the habitats that support our fisheries resources."

"Small dams can be big obstacles to fishery restoration, and small budgets can be big obstacles to reopening streams," said Rebecca R. Wodder, president of American Rivers. "Sometimes we provide seed money, sometimes we provide the last piece of the funding puzzle, but our partnership is always about helping communities reconnect their hometown streams to the ocean."

Under their previous three-year agreement, NOAA and American Rivers distributed more than \$1 million to remove 13 unwanted dams, bypass six other dams that will remain in place, replace three culverts, and complete five feasibility studies for future work. Twice a year for the next three years, NOAA and American Rivers will call for new proposals for dam removals and fish passage projects in the three target regions. To be eligible, applicants must secure additional matching funds and detail how their proposed project will benefit migratory fish species.

One project illustrates how restored streams not only improve fishery resources, but also provides important community amenities. Residents of Brentwood, Calif. had long regarded Lower Marsh Creek as little more than a trash-strewn drainage ditch – until the unexpected discovery of a large Chinook salmon at the base of dam reminded them of what it used to be. Inspired, community leaders began exploring the prospects for restoring the badly degraded stream. The community successfully sought funds from NOAA and American Rivers to remove the dam, restore the creek's natural meanders, and plant vegetation on the banks. When the work is finished, Brentwood residents will have access to an inviting stream valley where they can experience the annual spectacle of salmon returning to Lower Marsh Creek.

America's leading river organization, American Rivers gives a national voice to a growing movement of civic groups dedicated to protecting and restoring their hometown rivers and streams. In addition to its partnership with NOAA, American Rivers provides a broad range of technical assistance and advice to communities considering or planning the removal of unwanted dams.

The NOAA Restoration Center uses a community-based restoration program to work with organizations and governments to support locally driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas. NOAA funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities and provide long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. Since 1996, over 800 projects in 26 states have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners. For more information on the Community-based Restoration Program, please visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

Each year, NOAA awards approximately \$900 million in grants to members of the academic, scientific and business communities to assist the agency in fulfilling its mission to study the Earth's natural systems in order to predict environmental change, manage ocean resources, protect life and property, and provide decision makers with reliable scientific information. NOAA's goals and programs reflect a commitment to these basic responsibilities of science and service to the nation for the past 34 years.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. To learn more about NOAA, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.